



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – November 2012

Political Developments:

Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue

Kosovo PM Thaçi announced that the topics discussed in the EU-mediated dialogue with Serbia have included: missing persons; parallel structures, Kosovo's membership in international organisations and forums; protection of Serb cultural and historical heritage in Kosovo; telecommunications and energy; finalisation of decentralisation process; and the need to establish a municipality for North Mitrovica/ë and free elections in north Kosovo.

Thaçi and Serbia PM Dačić met for a second time to discuss the normalisation of relations. Both sides agreed to have a joint technical working group to prepare feasibility study for the construction of a Pristina-Niš motorway and the need for transparency regarding the funding of parallel structures. The meeting also discussed how to enhance the protection of Serb cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo.

Blerim Shala, a principal deputy leader for the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), has been appointed political coordinator for dialogue by Kosovo President Jahjaga.

Border Management

Technical teams from Serbia and Kosovo met on 14 November to make final preparations for the Integrated Border Management (IBM) agreement. The IBM agreement will be enforced at six border crossing points with Serbia. Implementation of the IBM will start in the beginning of December and will lead to joint checkpoints with policemen and customs officers from both Kosovo and Serbia. EULEX's role is still under negotiation.

Security in North Kosovo

Tensions have mounted in north Kosovo during November. There were several Serb protests opposing the reconstruction of Albanian homes in the Kroji Vitakut/ Brđane neighbourhood of North Mitrovica/ë. The road leading to the houses was blocked and there were violent clashes between Serbs and Albanians.

In reaction to developments in the IBM negotiations, a grenade was thrown at border crossing, and Serbs blocked the Iber main road. Oliver Ivanović, former Secretary for the Ministry for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia, threatened that Serbs would oppose implementation of the IBM with protests, barricades and blocking roads. Political leaders in the north argue that implementation of the IBM

represents the establishment of inter-state borders.

Other incidents include the targeting of the deputy head of the Administration office in North Mitrovica/ë by an explosive device, in Zvečan/Zvečan.

ICTY acquittal of Haradinaj

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) acquitted three former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commanders, including former PM Ramush Haradinaj, of all charges of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in a retrial. The ICTY ruling received mixed international reactions due to concern for reconciliation and justice for victims, and Serbia has expressed anger at the verdict. In Pristina, Haradinaj received a hero's welcome

Detention of KLA members

EULEX detained former KLA commander Fatmir Limaj a Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) deputy leader and 3 other former KLA fighters. The Supreme Court of Kosovo overturned an initial ruling that had stopped the criminal prosecution of Limaj and four of his fellow combatants for war crimes in Klečka. The case was returned to the District Court in Pristina. They have been ordered to one month detention on remand. The news was not received well in Kosovo and a protest demanding the release of Limaj impeded inauguration of the Rugova motorway.

Telephone Tapping scandal

Confidential telephone recordings were leaked and published on YouTube revealing conversations between Thaçi and senior PDK officials. While the government called the tapes fake, EULEX confirmed that the tapes were "authentic" and formed part of an ongoing investigation. The conversations reveal what senior PDK officials think of their party Secretary General and speaker of parliament, Jakup Krasniqi.

Celebration: 100 years Albanian state

On 28 December 2012, Kosovo celebrated the 100th anniversary of Albania's independence.

New Recognitions

Three new recognitions of the Republic of Kosovo have been confirmed by Fiji, Timor-Leste and St. Kitts and Nevis. As a result, Kosovo now has 96 recognitions.

ECMI Kosovo Project Updates:

Empowering civil society to participate effectively in policy and decision-making processes through dialogue with government institutions

ECMI Kosovo is pleased to announce that on 26 November a new 2-year project 'Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions' began implementation. In cooperation with the 2 local NGOs, ECMI Kosovo will contribute to creating the necessary conditions for effective dialogue and partnership between civil society and government institutions at the local and central levels. Furthermore, the project will raise awareness of the role of civil society and the importance of its participation in decision and policy-making processes; increase trust between civil society and government institutions; strengthen civil society's capacities to effectively engage in policy and decision-making processes at the local and central levels; and foster inter- and intra-ethnic cooperation among civil society organisations (CSOs) in Kosovo.

This project is funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo.

Enhancing minority communities' understanding of Kosovo's electoral system

In October ECMI Kosovo began implementing the 2-month project 'Enhancing Minority Communities' Understanding of Kosovo's Electoral System' in partnership with IFES and 5 Kosovo NGOs. During November, ECMI Kosovo organised more than 10 public information meetings across Kosovo's municipalities, aiming to increase understanding of the electoral system and the importance of participation in the electoral process. Also, a 2-week campaign distributed leaflets in 7 municipalities. Furthermore, 4 TV debates were organised and broadcasted in minority languages and 3 promotional videos were recorded with members of non-Albanian/Serb minorities throughout Kosovo to be broadcast over 1 week on RTK minority broadcastings. The videos are available on ECMI Kosovo's YouTube channel at: <http://bit.ly/SV4iGI>

This project was financed by the International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES).





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Integration through learning of official languages in Kosovo

In November, ECMI Kosovo ended its 5-month language courses of Albanian and Serbian language for municipal officials in the 3 municipalities of Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë, Obiliq/ Obilić, and Štrpce/ Shtërpçë. A joint conversation class for course participants was also organised, during which they could jointly practice professional and daily situations in both languages. Participants who successfully passed the final test and regularly attended classes will be awarded with a certificate.



ECMI Kosovo met with the Office for Community Affairs, the Kosovo Institute of Public Administration and the relevant ministries to discuss policy measures to enhance knowledge and use of the two official languages in Kosovo municipalities. The results will be published as a policy brief in the New Year.

This project is financed by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Improving the Delivery of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Education

In November, ECMI Kosovo participated in a two-day discussion on the education sector of the Action Plan on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Integration, hosted by MEST. The purpose was to review the monitoring framework so as to enhance reporting and measuring implementation, as well as to prioritize activities for the remainder of the Plan.

Knowledge Increase of the Socioeconomic Situation in Northern Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo's project team performed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data collected in the field after obtaining 721 respondents. The final report will soon be published in Albanian, Serbian and English languages. It will cover the following areas of study: education, healthcare, social

welfare, and economic development in North Kosovo.

This project is financed by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, complementing the project financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Legal aid to vulnerable and marginalised groups

November, legal aid lawyers provided free legal assistance to 53 beneficiaries. Moreover, on 15 and 16 November, ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with Albanian and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women's organisations, organised 2 training workshops on legal advocacy tools. On 1 and 23 November 2012, ECMI Kosovo supported two NGOs 'Naš Dom' and 'Relax' in organising advocacy round table discussions: first regarding problems of Serb and Roma community members in accessing civil registration in the Gjilan/ Gnjilane region; the second on the lack of access for Bosniak upper-secondary students to books in their mother tongue and the consequent detrimental effects on their education. Finally, ECMI Kosovo submitted a complaint to MEST regarding discriminatory content towards Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in an 8th grade reading textbook.

This project is funded by the European Union and managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo. See www.kosovo-legalaid.com.



Support to minority communities during and after the decentralisation process

ECMI Kosovo hosted a delegation of representatives from Finland, who met ECMI's main partners in the North, including civil society organisations and Mitrovica North Administrative Office (MNAO). Support to MNAO was ongoing with the design and publication of a presentation leaflet.

The latest emissions of TV show 'Nešto... između' ('Something... in-between'), coproduced by Radio

KIM and ECMI Kosovo, were broadcasted 7 and 19 November. They respectively covered issues of economic development and rule of law, with a focus on northern Kosovo. The podcasts are available at <http://bit.ly/TUt2iL> and <http://bit.ly/QVeizJ>.

This project is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Youth of Mitrovica/ë for democratic society

ECMI Kosovo and Association for Peace Kosovo (AFPK) prepared the first two training sessions which will address 'Peace and Reconciliation' and 'Democracy and its Historical Developments' and are respectively scheduled for 14-15 and 21-22 December 2012. Potential participants (high school pupils, students, youth centre members, or any other young people in North Mitrovica/ë) can still enrol by contacting the following e-mail address: nptmitrovica@gmail.com

This project is financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Pristina.

New project funded by the Swiss FDFA

ECMI Kosovo is pleased to announce the new project 'Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo,' funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The aim of the 1-year project is to improve governance on community issues in Kosovo by targeting a wide range of institutions and civil society actors, and focusing on sustainable tools. ECMI Kosovo has initiated the project's inception phase. The project incorporates recommendations made by a comprehensive independent evaluation commissioned by the Swiss FDFA, which analysed three projects successfully implemented by ECMI Kosovo 2006 - 2011.

Vacancies:

ECMI Kosovo is looking for a qualified Project Officer for the project 'Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo.' For further information, please see <http://bit.ly/Wm9m9Q>.

Staff changes:

ECMI Kosovo would like to welcome *Esved Ameti* to the team as Administrative Assistant. We would also like to say farewell

